

February 27, 2017

Dear Appropriations Committee:

I am writing you because I am alarmed that the Governor is proposing a second year of deep cuts to an already under-funded local public health system. The proposed FY 2018 cut of approximately 10% will be combined with the FY 17 cut of 10%. These cuts will have extraordinary ramifications for the delivery of core public health services, including for the Stratford Health Department.

We use our Per Capita dollars (\$55,232 for FY17) to partially fund the salaries of our Health Program Associate who assists with myriad Raymark Superfund-related activities, our part-time public health nurse (a town-funded position cut a few years ago under the Miron Administration, but which is still needed to address our influx of state-mandated communicable disease follow-up, daycare inspections, etc.), and a contractor to assist with restaurant inspections because we are understaffed in terms of sanitarians for a town our size.

Our Per Capita dollars also fund our part-time bilingual administrative support person, a great asset in assisting our Spanish-speaking residents and business owners. (It is one way we maintain culturally and linguistically appropriate standards in our nationally accredited local health department.) And because we try and stretch our funds to the maximum, we also used a small portion for our part-time health educator's time to create a nail salon practices educational campaign (#worththewait).

As you may have heard from my colleagues across the state, a cut to local public health only weakens the health system and increases the disparities within our communities. I worry everyday about how I am going to meet our obligations to protect public health, and ensure public safety with dwindling resources and added responsibilities. I urge you to consider the implications of this under investment in local public health, and support rescinding these cuts.

Sincerely,

  
Andrea L. Boissevain, MPH  
Director of Health

cc: Representative Laure Hoydick, Representative Joseph Gresko, Senator Kevin Kelley, Senator Ed Gomes, Mayor John A. Harkins